

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 CU-02 BIB-01 ACDA-07
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /083 W
-----301458Z 053838 /46

R 301405Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2369
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USMISSION NATO
/USMISSION USUN NEWYORK 545

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PFOR PINS PINT CSCE SHUM CZ
SUBJECT: CHARTER 77 - REACTION IN THE HINTERLAND

1. SUMMARY: CHARTER 77 ACTIVITY IN PRAGUE APPEARS TO BE REGARDED
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BY SUSPICIOUS SLOVAKS AS AN ANIT-HUSAK MOVE, BUT SOME EVIDENCE
SUGGESTS PRO-CHARTER ACTIVITY IS STARTING IN THE CZECH LANDS OUTSIDE
PRAGUE. END SUMMARY.

2. SO FAR CHARTER 77 HAS APPEARED TO BE LARGELY A PRAGUE
AND OVERWHELMINGLY A CZECH PHENOMENON. (THE FIRST LIST
OF SIGNERS INCLUDED ABOUT 20 RESIDENTS OF BRNO AND TWO NORTHERN

BOHEMIAN RESIDENTS ARRESTED ON CHARGES OF DISSEMINATING SUBVERSIVE LITERATURE WERE SAID TO BE SIGNERS, ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NOT SEEN THEIR NAMES ON ANY OF THE "OFFICIAL" LISTS.) ONE EXPLANATION GIVEN BY A CHARTER ADHERENT FOR THIS PRAGOCENTRICITY IS THAT THE AUTHORS OF CHARTER 77 DECIDED THAT ANY COORDINATED ACTION TO OBTAIN SIGNATURES IN OTHER LARGE CITIES COULD MAKE THE MOVEMENT OPEN TO CHARGES THAT IT WAS AN "ORGANIZATION", WHICH TO BE LEGAL WOULD HAVE TO BE REGISTERED WITH THE GOC.

3. SLOVAKIA: THROUGH THE AID OF VISITING SLOVAK SPEAKER AND INR/RSE ANALYST PAUL COSTOLANSKI WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GET SOME INSIGHT INTO THE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE CHARTER IN SLOVAKIA, PREVIOUSLY TERRA INCONGNITA ON THIS SUBJECT. IN CONVERSATIONS DURING THE PAST WEEKEND WITH FRIENDS OF VARYING BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL ATTITUDES IN BRATISLAVA COSTOLANSKI GAINED THE FOLLOWING IMPRESSIONS.

4. SLOVAKS SEE CHARTER 77 AS A PURELY CZECH ACTION AND BELIEVE ITS REAL PURPOSE IS TO CAUST THE OUSTER OF HUSAK, A SLOVAK, AS PRESIDENT AND CPCZ GENERAL SECRETARY AND TO REPLACE HIM WITH A CZECH, POSSIBLY PRAGUE PARTY SECRETARY ANTONIN KAPEK. THIS NATIONALISTIC INTERPRETATION WAS PUT FORWARD BY PEOPLE WITH BOTH PRO AND ANTI-COMMUNIST ATTITUDES. SOME ALLEGED THAT THE ONE KNOWN SLOVAK SIGNER, JAN TATARKA, SIGNED WHILE DRUNK. EVEN SLOVAKS WHO DISLIKED HUSAK PERSONALLY DO NOT WANT TO SEE "OUR SLOVAK PRESIDENT" REMOVED OR DEMOTED AND WOULD NOT SIGN THE CHARTER.

5. SLOVAKS ARE LESS INTERESTED THAN PRAGUE INTELLECTUALS IN THE HUMAN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RIGHTS ISSUE BECAUSE (A) WITH SLOVAKS IN TOP POSITIONS IN PRAGUE, SLOVAKIA HAS MADE UNPARALLELED MATERIAL PROGRESS SINCE 1969 -- "THEY NEVER HAD IT SO GOOD" AND THEY DON'T WANT A PREDOMINANTLY CZECH REGIME TO TAKE THEIR GAINS AWAY; AND (B) THE CRACKDOWN ON THOSE PURGED AFTER 1968 HAS BEEN MUCH Milder IN SLOVAKIA THAN IN THE CZECH LANDS. THEIR CHILDREN ARE, FOR EXAMPLE, ALLOWED TO ATTEND UNIVERSITIES AND ASPIRE TO GOOD JOBS. HUSAK IS CREDITED WITH THIS "MODERATE" POLICY. ON THE OTHER HAND, A SLOVAK PROFESSOR TOLD COSTOLANSKI THAT HE HOPED PRESIDENT CARTER WOULD KEEP UP HIS PRACTICE OF SPEAKING OUT ON RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN EASTERN EUROPE. (NOTE: COSTOLANSKI LEFT PRAGUE BEFORE WE COULD CLEAR PARAS 2-5 WITH HIM.)

6. CZECH LANDS: DURING COSTOLANSKI'S VISIT WE RECEIVED TWO SAMIZDAT LETTERS PURPORTING TO HAVE ORIGINATED IN PILSEN AND OSTRAVA. THEY ARE SIGNED ONLY "WORKING PEOPLE OF THE CSSR". THE PILSEN LETTER IS A REASONED EXPLANATION OF THE PURPOSE OF CHARTER 77 ADDRESSED TO "HONORABLE REPRESENTATIVES OF OUR PEOPLES," PRESUMABLY MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT OR LEGISLATURE. THE OSTRAVA

LETTER IS A BITTER RECITAL OF OFFENSES AGAINST HUMAN RIGHTS AND LIES TOLD BY THE REGIME ABOUT RIGHTS IN THIS COUNTRY AND A COMPLAINT ABOUT PRESSURES PUT ON PEOPLE TO SIGN ANTI-CHARTER STATEMENTS.

7. COMMENT: IF THESE LETTERS ARE AUTHENTIC, THEY ARE AN INDICATION THAT THE HUMAN RIGHTS FERMENT HAS SPREAD FROM PRAGUE TO TWO IMPORTANT INDUSTRIAL CENTERS IN BOHEMIA AND MORAVIA AND REACHED THE STAGE OF GOING PUBLIC THROUGH SAMIZDAT. (WE LEARNED FROM A LETTER SENT TO THE EMBASSY FROM OSTRAVA IN JANUARY THAT SOME PEOPLE THERE HAD BEEN MADE AWARE OF AND SYMPATHETIC TO THE CHARTER BY REGIME PRESSURES TO SIGN AN ANTI-CHARTER STATEMENT.) WE ARE NOT, HOWEVER, ENTIRELY CONVINCED OF THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE PRODUCTS FROM PILSEN AND OSTRAVA.

8. THE OSTRAVA LETTER IS AN EXAMPLE OF A DANGEROUS (FOR THE DISSIDENTS) TENDENCY WHICH WE HAVE RECENTLY NOTED FOR CHARTER-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ASSOCIATED SAMIZDAT MATERIAL TO DEPART FROM THE MODEL OF CALM DISCUSSION OF NON-IMPLEMENTATION OF LEGAL GUARANTEES AND THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT AND MOVE TOWARD PASSIONATE DIRECT CRITICISM OF THE SYSTEM AND ITS SHORTCOMINGS. SUCH CRITICISM COULD PUT THOSE WHO REPRODUCE THESE MATERIALS IN LEGAL JEOPARDY UNDER THE VARIOUS PENAL CODE CLAUSES FORBIDDING DEFAMATION OF THE STATE AND SOCIALISM, RATHER THAN, AS HERETOFORE, JUST MAKING THEM SUBJECT TO HARASSMENT.
BYRNE

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Message Attributes

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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 30-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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